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UNCLAS ABUJA 000521

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PTER US NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: 9-11 DISASTER SUPPORT

¶1. Post recently received the letter at para 3 (which included a donation of 15,000 Naira, or USD140), which is indicative of the messages of solidarity we have received from ordinary Nigerians in support of the families affected by 9-11. We thought it important to inform the Department how ordinary Nigerians have responded to the attacks on the United States.

¶2. On February 7, CG Lagos hosted a dinner for Nigerian donors to victims of 9/11; most, but not all donations came from Southern Nigerians. The two largest donations of N1 million (USD 8,770) each were received from a Pharmaceutical firm and a Managing Director of a bank. Many other donations came from ordinary Nigerians. While the size of many of these donations would be considered small by American standards, for most Nigerians, they represent a significant gesture (annual per capita GDP is N31,426 or USD285). Perhaps our most generous donor was 10-year old Dumebi Browne, who explained to a rapt audience at the CG dinner that he had donated N 1,000 to the 9/11 fund because "that was all he had in his piggy bank."

¶3.

Begin text:

To the American People c/o The Ambassador

Dear Sir:

My family and I watched on television with unspeakable horror the multiple terrorist attacks on symbols of your nation. We can only imagine for all eternity what manner of people these are, what kind of womb brought people like these into the world.

It is easy at times like this to question the existence of God but this is the time to emphasize the inscription on your nation's currency which says for all eternity, "In God We Trust." In God we should trust for the souls of those lost. In God we should trust for all those who have lost husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, friends and colleagues, for at times like this no words can fill the void in our hearts.

We are too far away to donate blood or help physically. Please accept this check for the sum of N15,000 for the American people for use in any way they deem fit to help those in need.

This is not an attack on the American people but on all members of the human race who believe in the sanctity of the human life. For all of us, the unthinkable has happened, but we all know that America will come out of this stronger. The New York skyline has changed but we know for sure that someday the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center will rise again.

God Bless the American People

/sgd/
Okechukwu and Udo Nwobu

Jeter